

to speak to the Maurstad amendment to the Maurstad amendment.

SENATOR WARNER: Madam President, members of the Legislature, Senator Maurstad's amendment to AM4131 that provides some, I believe, reduction in the levies that he had originally, plus an opportunity for a referendum, probably improves the basic amendment. However, I would still express concern about the amendment in total because it's setting up a totally different policy issue. And that policy issue is if you should have differential in maximum levies based on size. You could do the same argument for schools, same argument for counties where the larger ones would have a lower levy limit and the small ones a higher levy limit. I'm not sure that you want to start down that route of putting those kind of divisions across the state, because it's just as logical to do it for schools and counties as it is for these municipalities. It seemed to me that the approach that is in LB 1114 currently does permit the opportunity for the vote. I recall Senator Coordsen's comments on General File and how the election process, certainly on the villages, those under 800 population, was a fairly simple process. For those second class cities and first class cities, it's more of a complex issue because it'd have to be a regular special election. But aside from that, it seems to me that the likelihood of voter participation in this whole concept of incentives to get people to...willing to look at cooperative efforts, which they also have to vote on, that that ability to look at alternatives is going to be one, do I vote yes for a higher levy or do I vote yes on a proposed merger or a proposed cooperative effort, and therefore reducing the overall cost to government. If you make it easy to keep things as they are, they probably are going to stay as they are. And again, I would be...would vote for the amendment that Senator Maurstad has to his amendment because that is better that way, but I would still urge not to adopt the overall amendment, even as amended, because it sets this whole different policy which, you know, I...in fact, we have an amendment...I have an amendment to apply the same thing to schools and counties, but I'm very reluctant to start down that route. What we were attempting to do is have more uniform levies throughout the state. In part the Municipal Equalization Fund was to take care of some of these smaller entities. We have talked about that. It doesn't take care of them totally, but addresses that issue, and it seems to me that that's a far better route to go than to go the route of authorizing higher levies with the option then of reducing it by